

For More Information, Contact Your Local

NRCS/Conservation District Office

www.nh.nrcs.usda.gov

**Belknap County
Conservation District**

719 North Main St., Rm. 203,
Laconia, NH 03246
603-527-5880

**Concord Field Service Center/
Merrimack County
Conservation District**

10 Ferry St., Suite 211, Concord,
NH 03301
603-223-6021

**Conway Field Service Center/
Carroll County
Conservation District**

73 Main St., Conway, NH
03818
603-447-2771

**Epping Field Service Center
Knightly Plaza
629 Calef Highway, Suite 203
Epping, NH 03042
603-679-1587**

**Lancaster Field Service
Center/ Coos County
Conservation District**

4 Mayberry Lane, Lancaster,
NH 03584
603-788-4651

**Milford Field Service Center/
Hillsborough County
Conservation District**

Chappell Professional Ctr.,
#468, Rte. 13 South,
Milford, NH 03055
603-673-2409

**Orford Field Service Center/
Grafton County
Conservation District**

19 Archer Town Rd.
Orford, NH 03777
603-353-4651

**Rockingham County
Conservation District**

110 North Road, Brentwood,
NH 03833
603-679-2790

**Sullivan County
Conservation District**

24 Main Street, Newport, NH
03773
603-863-4297

**Strafford County
Conservation District**

259 County Farm Rd, Unit #3,
Dover, NH 03820
603-749-3037

**Walpole Field Service
Center/ Cheshire County
Conservation District**

11 Industrial Park Dr.
Walpole, NH 03608
603-756-2988

New Hampshire State Office

2 Madbury Rd.
Durham, NH 03824
603-868-7581

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Let's Restore New Hampshire's Beaver Flowages



What is a Beaver Flowage?

A beaver flowage is an area along a stream or river periodically flooded by beaver. Beaver flowages are also called beaver ponds, beaver meadows, or mud flats, depending on the current level of beaver activity.

Aren't Beavers Pests?

Sometimes beavers are pests. Although many landowners like the open water of beaver ponds, they object to the flooding of yards and gnawing of ornamental trees. Town officials fear damage to roads when beaver dams breach during storms or roads overtop because beavers have plugged culverts. The good news is that the negative impacts of beavers are largely avoidable and their beneficial impacts are important to New Hampshire's ecological health.

One of the reasons that beavers seem so disruptive, particularly in residential areas, is that in many cases they are returning after a long absence. In the last century, when New Hampshire's agriculture and trapping were at their peaks, beavers were eliminated from many areas of the state.

In their absence, forests and people came to occupy former beaver flowages. When returning beavers flood these areas, the death of whole stands of dead trees and the flooding of yards can be quick and dramatic.

Why are they Important?

Beaver activity is cyclic. Beavers move into a suitable area and flood it. Standing trees such as white pine are killed. Many aquatic plants quickly sprout in the open water. The combination of snags, open water, and aquatic plants provide habitat for wildlife. Great Blue Herons

nest in colonies in beaver ponds using dead trees to support their large nests. Beaver ponds are an important wintering habitat to wood turtles, which hibernate, in the muddy bottom.

The pond stage of a beaver flowage is only the beginning. Eventually the beavers run out of food and leave. Without constant maintenance, the beaver dam drains. Eventually the pond becomes a mud flat and later a sedge meadow.

In the mud flat stage, the former beaver pond is very important to shore birds such as the spotted sandpiper. The sedge meadow stage of beaver flowages is important to other animals and is particularly important as habitat for many species of rare plants.

Why do they need Restoring?

Many beaver flowages have been degraded by human activity. In the more populated areas of the state they have been fragmented by roads and encroached on by development. In some cases, beavers have been killed. The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) is trying to remedy these problems by helping beavers and humans coexist.

Restoring Beaver Flowages

There are three steps in restoring beaver flowages (or any other native ecosystem).

- Understand the ecosystem under natural conditions.
- Understand the human caused stressors that have degraded it.
- Figure out how to relieve the stressors.

There are many stressors on beaver flowages. Generally, they result from competition between beavers and humans for living space. In most cases, the problems occur around the periphery of beaver flowages. Beavers rarely flood houses, they are more likely to flood the lower edges of yards and woods roads. NRCS will help landowners restore beaver flowages while protecting their property.

Landowner participation is voluntary. A variety of measures is available to control water levels and protect property.

Joint Efforts

Many landowners are working with the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and County Conservation Districts to restore beaver flowages on their property. Cooperating in this effort are state, federal and local agencies and non-profit groups. Included are the Audubon Society of New Hampshire, NH Fish & Game, NH Division of Forests and Lands, US Fish and Wildlife Service, NH Natural Heritage Program, the Nature Conservancy, and UNH Cooperative Extension.

Several cost-share programs are available to help landowners restore beaver flowages on their property.

What can you do?

Contact your nearest NRCS and Conservation District office. They will assist you in determining if you have a potential restoration site on your property. They can also offer assistance on restoring other important ecosystems such as salt marshes, Pine Barrens and grasslands.